

**REMARKS**

The above preliminary amendment is made to remove multiple dependencies from claims 9 and 45.

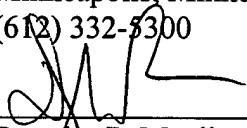
Applicants respectfully request that the preliminary amendment described herein be entered into the record prior to calculation of the filing fee and prior to examination and consideration of the above-identified application.

If a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any issues concerning this communication, please contact Applicants' primary attorney-of record, Douglas P. Mueller (Reg. No. 30,300), at (612) 371.5237.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 26 March 2004

  
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Douglas P. Mueller  
Reg. No. 30,300

DPM:hjm

